

A STREAK OF LUCK.

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AN AMERICAN COMEDY

IN FIVE TABLEAUX.

By Samuel B. Higgins

FREELY ADAPTED FROM
BESANT AND RICE'S "THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY."

NEW YORK:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1879.

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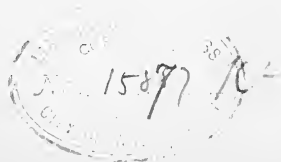
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34
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ASTOR LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

17

TIME: THE PRESENT.

Scene—New York.

CHARACTERS:

GILEAD W. FRARY, of Fraropolis.

LAWRENCE BAINBRIDGE, a man of leisure.

RONALD MORTLAKE, an Englishman.

JOSEPH NOWARK, a lawyer.

HENRY ST. JOHN, a capitalist.

HUMPHREY NOWARK, an artist, } Twins.

LUCIUS NOWARK, a poet,

EPHRAIM SOWLLD, a private secretary.

PHILLIS LAMONT, who can neither read nor write.

AGATHA SUNCLIFFE, a widow.

MADELEINE ST. JOHN, a woman with a history.

ANTOINETTE MALRAISON, a French maid.

A MAID-OF-ALL-WORK in the house of Joseph Nowark.

A LAWYER'S CLERK.

1. *Chlorophyll a* (Chl *a*)

1000

100

100

TABLEAU I.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

Drawing-room in the house of Joseph Nowark; fire-place; library table; book-cases; near fire-place large arm-chair, in which Humphrey Nowark, asleep; near table another, in which Lucius Nowark, also asleep; after an instant both wake.

H. N. Why! I've been asleep. [*Stretching.*]

L. N. Why? So have I! [*stretching.*] That's strange; how could it have happened, brother?

H. N. My dear Lucius, it must have been the mental action that the "Upheaving of Montezuma" always causes, which exhausted you. Your brain-work, brother, is terribly severe. Ah! what a poem yours will be! I shall glory in the reflected light of Lucius, the poet. But [*rising and approaching window, rear*] did you ever see a purer symphony in gold and brown than those sun-rays shining on the mud yonder?

L. N. [*Rising.*] Ah! what an artistic eye you have, brother! We poets, wrapped in our musings, live in another sphere, but you—why [*walking the floor excitedly*] even sunshine and mud, the most common things, suggest a beautiful effect.

H. N. [*Still at window and sighting through closed hands.*] I must really fix that effect. [*L. N. goes to closet L and takes out two glasses, which he fills.*]

L. N. [*Holding out glass to H. N.*] Brother!

H. N. Oh! Ah! Yes, indeed. Really. [*Looking and then tasting.*] Old Tom? Thank you. [*Both drinking.*]

SERVANT. [*Entering and arranging glasses &c., in closet.*] Mr. Humphrey, did you know that Miss Lamont had come?

H. N. Why, no; has she?

SERV. She came this afternoon with a French maid, and is up in Mr. Joseph's room.

L. N. Brother, don't you suppose Miss Lamont would like some champagne for dinner?

H. N. What a man you are, brother Lucius! Always thinking of others' comfort! Jane [*to servant*]

you must put plenty of Mumm's Ex. Dry on the ice for dinner. I am certain Miss Lamont likes Mumm's Ex. Dry. Be sure, now.

SERV. Oh, Mr. Joseph said he should have one or two friends to dinner to-night. The wine will be ready, sir. [*Retires.*]

L. N. [*Taking arm of H. N.*] Come, brother, let us go out into the air. This glorious afternoon will suggest thoughts fit for Montezuma.

H. N. Yes, and the sky, with its brilliant hues, the clouds with their tints, will suggest effects fit for the painting your plan—the Apotheosis of Washington.

L. N. What a poetical mind you have, Humphrey!

H. N. Ah! What an artist's eye is yours, Lucius! [*Retire, and re-enter Servant, who busies herself about the room, then coming forward.*]

SERV. Well? there they go. I never could see why Mr. Joseph kept two such useless kids round the house. Mr. Humphrey an artist! Why he couldn't paint a country stage-coach! Mr. Lucius a poet! If that's the stuff poets is made of, I don't want 'em 'round me. They eat their breakfast and then take a walk, and then come in and go up to what Mr. Lucius calls their—sancrum—that's it, sancrum, and go to sleep. They do nothing all day and sit up all night, and if I was Mr. Joseph I wouldn't spend all my life getting bread and butter for any such luggage, not me! [*Bustles about, and while at work enter Joseph Nowark and Lawrence Bainbridge.*]

J. N. [*Motioning Bain. to seat, and taking seat himself by table.*] I'm very glad to see you back in New York after so long a time, Mr. Bainbridge. We never quite understood why you left us so suddenly, or what kept you away.

L. B. Well, it was a whim, a fancy. I had no business, you know. Army life had unfitted me for that. And so I thought I'd wander West. I don't regret it. Many's the strange experience I've had. I am glad, though, to return. And how is my little ward?

J. N. Phillis is little no longer, Mr. Bainbridge. I don't think you will recognize your little ward in the tall young lady up stairs. By the way, did you ever particularly acquaint yourself with the system of education that old Mr. Dyson trained Phillis in?

L. B. I never did. I have been remiss in my duty

to the little girl. But now I'll assume my responsibility. Why do you ask, though?

J. N. Well, it has seemed to me that there was something singular in her manner. Not that it isn't charming, and maidenly, and all that; but it's queer. She doesn't seem like other girls. When you see her you can judge.

L. B. You know old Mr. Dyson was her father's most particular friend, and at Lamont's death she went there to live and was entirely under his charge. He was eccentric enough, certainly. Now I think of it, I don't believe I have ever written a letter to her in all this time, and not more than two or three to him during his life. Is she pretty?

J. N. You shall see when she comes down. And while I think of it, in the course of your travels did you ever meet an individual by the name of Gilead W. Frary? He is one of the men whom oil has made suddenly rich. I expect him here this afternoon.

L. B. Gilead W. Frary! [*thinking*]. The name sounds familiar. [*Suddenly*] Yes, it must be the man. It must be. The queerest genius you ever saw. I saved his life from a grizzly in the Sierra Nevadas. [*Enter servant, who hands card to J. N.*]

J. N. [*reads*] Gilead W. Frary. [*To servant*] Show the gentleman up. [*To L. B.*] Here's your man. He's certainly prompt.

[*Servant ushers in Mr. G. W. F. Now. and Bain. rise.*]

G. W. F. [*Going to Now. and grasping his hand.*] Mr. Nowark, I'm delighted to see you. This is one of God's afternoons, sir, and it's no credit to me that I am prompt. Col. Quigg, of Indianapolis, of the law firm of Quigg, Wiggins & Higgins—a man of your profession, sir—used to say that promptness, not order, was heaven's first law. Why, sir, I've seen that man talk to a Western jury—[*Sees Bainbridge, and leaving Nowark, whose hand he has held, rushes to Bainbridge and grasps his*]. Is it possible that this is Mr. Bainbridge. Sir, I have never forgotten you. It is owing to you, sir, that Gilead W. Frary is able to breathe heaven's free air on this beautiful afternoon. It was a case of Frary *versus* Grizzly, and Grizzly had the best case. What's more, there was no appeal. [*Turning to Now., but still holding Bain by hand.*] Mr. Nowark, this gentleman saved my life. If he isn't the author of my existence, he's its preserver. I owe him a debt, I've got the means to pay it, and by Jove I propose to do so.

J. N. You certainly have the means to pay, Mr. Frary. But be seated [*Motioning to chair. All sit, but Frary rises and stands in front of fire-place.*]

FRARY. Mr. Nowark, let me tell you about the way this gentleman saved my life. It was in the sage-bush, a mile or two back of Empire City. Since I'd been in the dog-goned country I'd had one or two near things, but that was the nearest. I went over from Carson to Empire City for work. I needed it. Adam wasn't more destitute when the garden gates were shut on him. Pretty much all I had was an old gun. I had the prettiest shot at that old grizzly you ever saw, but somehow I missed. Then he started in my direction, and there ensued one of the prettiest, cleanest-footed races you ever dreamed of. But that grizzly was a good runner. One minute more and Gilead W. Frary would have personally interviewed St. Peter, but your bullet [*going to where L. B. sits, and taking again his hand*] deprived the saint of that pleasure. I said then, sir, that if I ever had any luck you should share it, and your friend with you. Is that gentleman in the land of the living?

BAIN. Mortlake? Yes, he's here in New York.

FRARY. Then, gentlemen, I shall invite you to the best dinner that Mr. Delmonico can furnish a man with money in his purse. I shall telegraph to San Francisco for a hind-quarter of grizzly bear in honor of the occasion.

BAIN. Which I shall be glad to taste. But Mr. Frary, how is it that I meet you here in New York. You told me once you never proposed to come East.

FRA. Mr. Bainbridge, man proposes, but that's the end of it. Since I saw you I have been treated as tough as Providence can treat a man when it's thoroughly down on him. I've taught singin'-school in Tipton, Iowa; I've been conductor on a Pullman Palace car; I've been ticket-taker to a circus company. But I'm happy to say that Providence has let up on me. I guess it's because it buffeted me so long that it got completely tired out. I'm not a boasting man, Mr. Nowark, but my income must be close on to twenty-five hundred dollars a day, Sundays included.

Now. Is it possible? I shall warn all the marriageable young women I know of the fact. By the way, where is our young lady? [*Goes to bell-rope and rings. Servant enters.*] Go up stairs and ask Phillis and Mrs. Suncliffe if they can come down. [*Servant retires.*]

FRA. Do so, sir. I love the girls. Give me a fresh face, no airs. Is this young lady a relation?

Now. I am trustee for her estate, and as one of her guardians—the one with whom she lived—has just died, she is to stay with us for a while. Mrs. Suncliffe, my sister, will, after a little, take her to Englewood, where she has a place, and lives most of the year. I will present you. [*Enter Phil. and Mrs. Sun. The gentlemen rise.*]

Now. Phillis, let me present to Mrs. Suncliffe and to you, Mr. Bainbridge. He means to fill Mr. Dyson's place for you, my dear. And Mr. Frary also. [*Turning to Fra.*]

[*Fra. recognizes Phil., and crossing, engages in conversation with Mrs. Sun.*]

BAIN. [*Kissing Phil. on forehead.*] So this is little Phillis, whom I remember as a rosy-cheeked, roly-poly little thing of twelve. Now how she's changed!

PHIL. Oh I'm so glad to see you, I've wanted to so much. You were a friend of my poor papa's.

BAIN. His best friend.

FRA. [*Turning from Mrs. Sun, and taking both hands of Phil. in his own.*] I am told, Miss Phillis, that Mr. Bainbridge is your guardian. Now I should be poetical, if I knew how, gazing on your fresh cheeks, my dear, but I'd rather confine myself to facts and tell you what a guardian you've got. You will not be offended if I tell you that he is pre-eminently Boss. He saved my life from a grizzly bear in the Sierra Nevadas, Miss Phillis. I hope, my dear, you'll never hear such a sound as the crack of his rifle that day. I thought it was the crack of doom! [*Solemnly.*]

PHIL. Did he save your life? [*Looking toward Bain.*]

BAIN. [*Coming forward.*] Mr. Frary says so, Phillis, but, as I remember it, Mortlake and I fired at the same time, and the bear was hit by both shots. But he's writing up our travels. You shall read all about it in his book.

PHIL. Oh, but Mr. Bainbridge, I can't read.

ALL. [*In astonishment.*] You can't read!

PHIL. Why, no. Mr. Dyson used to say that reading and writing weren't of half as much consequence as many other things to a young girl. I can't read or write, but I paint fairly well, and I love to play.

FRA. Great Lord! He kept you till this and never taught you to read and write! His brain must have

been as crazy as a Connecticut gospel-grinder's at a Methodist camp-meeting!

MRS. SUN. [*To Bain.*] It's indeed so, Mr. Bainbridge. This strange system of education of Mr. Dyson's has kept the child fifteen years behind her age.

PHIL. [*With animation.*] Now I'm not so sure about that, Mrs. Suncliffe. Mr. Dyson used to say that half the false teaching in life came from filling children's heads with ideas they couldn't understand.

BAIN. [*Fra., crossing and conversing with J. N. and Mrs. S.*] But how did you pass your time, Phillis? [*They take seats near fire-place.*]

PHIL. Oh, it was a very quiet life. Only two or three old gentlemen ever came to the house, and I never went out. Then I had a music teacher twice a week. I play by memory, you know.

BAIN. But, my dear, how did you contrive to pass the day?

PHIL. That was very easy. I had a ride before breakfast. There was a large field, you know, that I could ride in. Then, after breakfast, Mr. Dyson and I talked on what he called Subjects, for an hour or two. Then, for the rest of the day, I played, sewed and drew.

BAIN. And you had no girl friends?

PHIL. No. Mr. Dyson said that most young girls were fools.

BAIN. And you never before have been in New York?

PHIL. Never, since I was a child.

BAIN. [*Musingly.*] What a strange education! [*To Phil.*] I'm afraid there is a great deal that we shall have to correct in all this, Miss Phillis. There'll be many things for you to learn, little girl.

PHIL. Oh, it's all so strange and new to me that I'm bewildered with it. [*Fra. comes across to fire-place.*]

FRA. I ain't sure that that idea of your guardian's about learning girls to read too early, Miss Phillis, is wrong. When I was about twenty I kept a district school for a dollar a day. It was out in Ohio. There was a scholar in my school by the name of Pete Dinwiddie, and I always thought he used to like a seat between two of the girls when he didn't have his lesson, which candor compels me to state was most of the time. You see, the most of the boys used to regard this as a disgrace, but Pete en-

joyed it. One day I found out that little Remember Squeers, one of the brightest girls in the whole school, but a little thing, put Pete up to missing his lessons so he could come over and sit with her. You see there are some things girls learn too quick, and on mature deliberation I incline to think reading and writing help 'em to their precocious condition.

J. Now. I'm afraid, Mr. Frary, you're not a believer in the higher education of woman.

FRA. I am, sir. I believe in fitting her to adorn any sphere. But some women, sir, can be over-educated. I don't believe that would be possible with this charming young lady here. But what I mean is this: When I was about thirty-five I edited a paper in that delightful part of Illinois known as Egypt. I wonder if any of you have ever been there? [*All dissent.*] No? Then, my friends, you don't know what you've gained. The first man that named that country Egypt had a profound sense of the eternal fitness of things. My paper was the "Pawnee Clarion," and I thought as it was a new thing for that section I'd have a society column. So one of the issues devoted considerable space to such items as "Mrs. Badger, the accomplished wife of Alderman Ben Badger, was seen on Main avenue to-day in a lovely new brown and white striped gingham dress." There were more of the same kind, but that's a fair sample. After that issue my first visitor was Ben Badger. He called to say that as a member of the city government he wouldn't submit to have his wife libeled. I tried to show him that I meant my item for a compliment. "Compliment," said Badger, "it's beastly twaddle." Said I, "Mr. Badger, which member of your august board does the heavy business?" Said he, "We all take a hand in when it's serious, but I think I'm enough for you." It didn't take more than five minutes for me to finish him, but the trouble was that I had to keep up that sort of thing all day. The husband of every woman in town called on me for a personal explanation. By night I was perfectly exhausted, and the next day I sold out that paper for two hundred and fifty dollars. But the point I'm driving at is that those women, if they'd been a little less high and mighty, would have seen that what they thought was an insult, I meant for a compliment. [*Drawing out large bandanna handkerchief and wiping his forehead.*] [*Enter at left, while all*

are amused at Frary's recital, *H. Nowark and L. Nowark.* *J. Now. steps forward, while they recognize Mrs. Sun. and Bain.*]

J. N. Phillis, I want to present to you my two brothers, Mr. Humphrey Nowark, Mr. Lucius Nowark, Miss Lamont. My brother Humphrey is an artist, Phillis, while Lucius is going to be a great poet. [*Phillis bows.*] [*To Fra.*] Mr. Frary, my brothers. We are all old bachelors, and to have ladies in the house is such a new experience we hardly know how to act. [*Laughingly.*]

FRA. Gentlemen, I'm delighted to meet you.

H. Now. [*Both H. N. and L. N. standing near Phil.*] Miss Lamont, my brother Lucius [*bowing to L.*], who is just presented to you, is a marvel. To know him is a liberal education. Cultivate him, talk to him, learn from him. You'll be very glad some day to know that you've known him. To converse with him is culture itself. He will be one of the greatest artists of any age or time.

L. Now. [*Bowing to H.*] My brother needlessly depreciates himself, Miss Lamont. He will be a great painter. It will well become you, too, to know that child-like and simple nature, aglow with the flame of genius and innocent of the world. [*Bain. watching in amusement.*]

PHIL. Really, are you an artist and poet? I don't know anything about poets, and [*to H. N.*] I never supposed an artist was quite like you.

FRA. [*Aside.*] Nor I either, by Jove. And what's more, I don't believe an artist is like him—although—although—the breed does look and act like the devil himself sometimes.

BAIN. [*Coming forward, the twins standing arm-in-arm and looking at them.*] Phillis, I want to talk with you a little. [*They pass to side.*] Tell me something more about your guardian and his system. I've been very remiss in my duties to you, I'm afraid.

PHIL. Oh, no one could have been kinder to me than dear old Mr. Dyson? He often spoke of you, and wondered why you kept away from New York. I like you already, but it does not seem to me as if I would ever like you as well as him. And why haven't you ever been to see me?

BAIN. Well, Phillis, New York wasn't a pleasant place for me, so I've kept out of it.

PHIL. It seems to me so lovely. And I know I shall find lots of friends. Mrs. St. John, whose

husband is some relative of Mr. Dyson's, is coming to see me to day.

BAIN. What! Madeleine St. John! [*Aside.*] She must not meet me, or I her, here.

PHIL. Why, do you know her?

BAIN. I used to, my dear. [*Musing.*]

H. N. [*Who, with L. N., has been talking to Frary at side.*] You, my dear sir [*to Fra.*], so able to become a Mæcenas if you choose, must come to our little workshop, as we call it, and my brother Lucius shall read to you one or two stanzas of "The Upheaving of Montezuma." [*To L. N.*] Will you not, brother?

FRA. The Upheaving of Montezuma! Great Popocatapettl!

L. N. [*To H. N.*] You, brother, shall show Mr. Frary the sketches for the Apotheosis of Washington. Will you not?

FRA. Great Lord! [*The twins place themselves one on each side of Fra., and the three ex.*]

BAIN. [*Rising, and to Mrs. Sun., who has been talking to J. N.*] Mrs. Suncliffe, I meant to have stayed longer with you, but——[*Enter Mrs. St. John.*]

MRS. ST. J. My dear Mrs. Suncliffe, I thought I would come up without the formality of sending my name. I'm so glad——[*Catches sight of Bain., and, starting, sinks into chair.*]

MRS. SUN. Are you faint? What is it? [*All coming forward.*]

MRS. ST. J. [*After a moment.*] I'm better. [*Rising.*] I think it was a little faintness only. [*To Bain.*] I'm sure this must be Mr. Bainbridge. [*Bowing.*]

BAIN. [*Bowing.*] I'm very glad to see you again, Mrs. St. John.

(CURTAIN FALLS.)

TABLEAU II.

THE STORY OF A FORTUNE.

Drawing-room of Mrs. St. John. At rear, opening from it, conservatory. At side, piano; opposite, sofas; in centre, table; Phillis and Mortlake discovered, Phillis playing, Mort. leaning over piano.

MORT. So Mr. St. John is a relative of yours?

PHIL. No, not of mine. He is Mr. Dyson's nephew. Mr. Dyson, you know, left all his property to found an institution for educating young ladies as I have been educated.

MORT. Without learning to read or write.

PHIL. Yes, but Mr. Nowark tells me that part of his plan is lost, so the heirs are going to contest the will, whatever that is. Mr. St. John wants to divide the money among the relatives. Isn't that funny, when he has so much already?

MORT. [*Amazed*]. Awfully. Never heard of such a funny thing in my life. Never. And you like Mr. Nowark?

PHIL. Oh, there are three of them. Don't you know the twins?

MORT. Can't say I ever had that pleasure. Are they children?

PHIL. [*Laughing*]. Yes, with beards that long! [*dumb show*].

MORT. Ah! Curious! Ought to be exhibited!

PHIL. [*Gravely*]. I will tell you what I mean. Mr. Dyson used to say that some people fool away their youth till when they grow older they can't do even poor work. I think the twins belong to that class of people.

MORT. Ah! I'm sorry. But you said you would show me your drawings, Miss Lamont.

PHIL. So I will, if you wish to see them. I had them with me when I came over with Aunt this afternoon, [*Going to portfolio, and taking several drawings, which she hands Mort*].

MORT. They are excellent. You are an artist, Miss Lamont.

PHIL. It seems so funny to be called Miss. Everybody used to call me Phillis.

MORT. Was everybody young?

PHIL. No, everybody was old. But I like to be called Phil. best. And your name is Ronald? [*Repeating*]. Ronald! That's stiff!

MORT. My friends call me Jack.

PHIL. [*Clapping her hands*]. Oh, I like that better. May I call you Jack?

MORT. Yes, if you will let me call you Phil.

PHIL. And we will be great friends, won't we, Jack?

MORT. Yes, and let's shake hands over our promise.

PHIL. [*Extending both hands, which Mort. takes*]. Jack Mortlake, I like you very much. I hope I shall like you more. Now we must always be friends.

MORT. [*Holding her hands still*]. Phil Lamont. I think you are the loveliest girl I ever saw in my life. I—hope— I shall like you more and more. Let's seal the bargain—early Christians, you know—with a kiss. [*Attempting to draw her toward him. As he approaches to kiss her, she draws herself away.*]

PHIL. [*With troubled air.*] You mustn't do that, Jack?

MORT. [*Hanging his head.*] Please forgive me, Phil.

PHIL. I'll forgive you, Jack, but you must not do so any more. [*They turn to drawings and look them over. Enter Mrs. Sun. and Mrs. St. John. Mort. engages in conversation with Mrs. Sun. and Mrs. St. J. approaches Phil.*]

MRS. ST. J. Miss Lamont, come and let us have a little chat. [*Both sitting on sofa L.*] We used to think, Miss Lamont, that perhaps you had something to do with your old guardian's eccentricities, but when he died, and left all his property to female education, we found that we had done you a wrong. [*Mort. and Mrs. S. walk into conservatory.*]

PHIL. Why, I have got money enough myself. Why should he leave me his money?

MRS. ST. J. [*Aside.*] What a girl. [*To Phil.*] But think of his money going to found such a heathenish system! If he had only left it to the Society for the Extension of the Knowledge of Ceramics among Indigent Females! But to bring up girls as you were brought up! It's dreadful.

PHIL. But I'm respectable. [*In broken accents.*]

MRS. ST. J. Of course you are. But my dear, you can't read or write. Every cild of eight can do that.

PHIL. Perhaps that's the worse for the child.

MRS. ST. J. [*Severely.*] Miss Lamont, you are very wrong. Everybody in society knows how to read and write. [*Phil. first commences to cry, then begins to whistle.*] Oh! my dear, dear young lady, you must not whistle!

PHIL. Don't people in society whistle!

MRS. ST. J. Heavens! It's very vulgar. Never do so. But first, now, let me see how you are dressed. Just stand a moment. [*Phil. stands.*] Well, my dear, for one thing, you are perfectly dressed. That will go very far. [*Phil. seats herself.*] Now what are your other accomplishments? I want to know your means of attraction.

PHIL. But why need girls try to attract?

MRS. ST. J. Phillis Lamont, ask me that question in one year's time if you can!

PHIL. [*Hesitatingly.*] I can draw a little and play. I have some of my drawings here. Shall I show them to you. [*Goes to table C, takes portfolio of drawings and hands them to Mrs. St. J. who examines them critically.*]

MRS. ST. J. They are clever drawings, Miss Fleming, but show a tendency to caricature. This you must avoid. Men hate a woman who can make fun of them.

PHIL. Oh!

MRS. ST. J. But on the whole, my dear child, I think I can make you succeed. Now it's absolutely necessary that you should read and write [*going to table and taking a silk bag*] I've brought some alphabet blocks for you. They are the same the charity children learn their letters with [*seats herself, pours the blocks on the sofa, and selects two.*] Now see this one. Can you tell what the picture is?

PHIL. [*Taking block and looking at it.*] It looks like some sort of a deer. But it's awfully drawn!

MRS. ST. J. It is an antelope, A. And this? [*Handing Phil. second block.*]

PHIL. Oh! that's a bear!

MRS. ST. J. B. And this? [*Same as before with third.*]

PHIL. Cat! [*In glee.*] I'm getting on!

MRS. ST. J. C. Now, I'm going to teach you in this way.

PHIL. Then an antelope is A, a bear B, and a cat C? I see.

MRS. ST. J. Oh, what shall I do with her?

PHIL. Mrs. St. John, you don't like me! I know it. I'm not like other girls. When I rode out yesterday I saw all sorts of looking girls. Some that walked like this [*rising and imitating*], and others like this. I'm not like them. And then the boys! They were all whistling this air. [*Whistles.*]

MRS. ST. J. Oh, my dear young lady; don't, don't, don't! Let me hear you sing instead. [*Phil. seats herself at piano, and after play prelude sings. Mort. and Mrs. L. reënter.*]

PHIL. [*At close.*] There; do I sing as well as most girls in society?

MRS. ST. J. Very much better, Miss Fleming. Now I'm sure I can make you get on.

MRS. SUN. [*Coming forward.*] And now, Mrs. St. John, I think we must leave you. I'm going to take Phillis down to Stewart's. You know she has never seen a store!

MRS. ST. J. Never—seen—a—store! What an awful condition of mind! It's terrible!

MORT. Never saw a store myself. We call 'em shops, you know. May I go, too?

PHIL. Oh, yes, you must come, Jack?

MRS. ST. J. Jack!

MORT. Our way, Mrs. St. John. Phil., Jack, don't you see. [*Pointing first to Phil., then to himself.*]

MRS. SUN. I think we must change our little girl in many ways, Mrs. St. John. And I'm ashamed of you, Mr. Mortlake. But come, Phillis; we must be going. [*All move toward door.*]

PHIL. [*Going out.*] Mrs. St. John, don't people in society call one another by their first names? [*Ex. Phil., Mort. and Mrs. Sun.*]

MRS. ST. J. [*Seating herself at piano and running over keys; then resting her head on her hands.*] What a strange girl. So unconventional, yet such a lady. I wonder if he would care for her—if he will care for her. He's her guardian, and such a position—[*Enter maid who hands Mrs. St. J. card.*] Show the gentleman in. Now I will see. He shall not fall in love with her. I will prevent it. [*Enter Bain.*]

BAIN. [*Mrs. St. J. rising and taking his hand.*] The duke's motto, Mrs. St. John; I am here. What is your wish, Madame?

MRS. ST. J. I did want so to see you, Laurence. You know why.

BAIN. My name is Bainbridge, Mrs. St. John.

MRS. ST. JOHN. My name, Laurence, is Madeleine. Have you forgotten it? [*Seating herself.*]

BAIN. I have forgotten everything; the past is dead between you and me.

MRS. ST. J. No, I cannot bury it, Laurence. [*Bursting into tears.*] I cannot.

BAIN. This is very foolish. You have a husband, older than yourself, it is true, but at least worthy of your respect. A child whom you love—if you can love anything.

MRS. ST. J. Oh, Laurence!

BAIN. And why do you seek to reopen the past? In deference to your wishes I went abroad. I stayed four years. Then, returning, and not seeing you, I buried myself in the West. You married. I regarded myself as free and returned to New York. I have forgotten everything of those few days of madness and repentance. I do not seek to remember them!

MRS. ST. JOHN. But I cannot forget!

BAIN. You must. Think of what you are—a married woman. Have pride enough in your husband's name to keep it unsullied by this sort of thing. The manner of it don't suit you.

MRS. ST. JOHN. [*Springing up.*] And you think you have the right to insult me, it seems!

BAIN. Right! God knows I claim no right of any kind over you. Only I ask that this may stop. I want to forget my folly and your shame.

MRS. ST. J. Laurence! Laurence! [*Reseating herself and burying her face in her hands.*]

BAIN. Mrs. St. John, you have a husband and a child. I don't know whether you are happy or not in your married life. I do not care if you are not. Time brings its revenges. Maybe marriage is its revenge upon you.

MRS. ST. J. Be kinder, Laurence. Ever since that day when we parted and I went back to the old life, I have been, oh! so unhappy. Mr. St. John came. You know how poor I was. He offered me money—freedom. I thought you were coming back. I accepted them.

BAIN. One of the most plausible defences of bigamy I ever heard!

MRS. ST. J. Cold and sneering as ever. But just tell me that you forgive me. [*In broken accents.*]

BAIN. There is no question of forgiveness here, Mrs. St. John. I take myself absolutely out of your way. That is all.

MRS. ST. J. I know I wronged you that day, Laurence, but I never appreciated you. [*Taking his hand, which she kisses.*]

BAIN. [*Laughing.*] Appreciated me! Oh, I shall hold my tongue, never fear. I don't want to appear in a criminal trial, if only as the fool. How beautifully it would appear in the speech of the State's attorney, "Gentlemen of the Jury [*Bain strikes an attitude, and becomes oratorical*], five or six years ago, a woman—the woman at the bar—[*pointing at her*] determined to win a man with money. She did not scruple at the means to be used. She was above conventionalities. She compromised herself, and then—then, gen—" [*Enter St. J. Fra., and Sowld. Sowld. crosses, takes out note-book and takes seat without noticing any one. Fra. and St. J. stand near entrance.*]

FRA. [*Clapping his hands.*] As good as any Indiana criminal lawyer I ever heard stump speaking at a barbecue!

MRS. ST. J. [*Going to St. J. and taking him by the hand.*] I want to introduce to you, dear, an old friend, Mr. Bainbridge. Mr. Bainbridge was just rehearsing a speech he heard somewhere in California. It was so well done!

ST. J. I am very glad to know all my wife's old friends, Mr. Bainbridge.

BAIN. Thank you, Mr. St. John. How are you, Frary. I see that you gentlemen are about to talk business. [*Turning to Mrs. St. J.*] I think I'll excuse myself.

MRS. ST. J. Business! I detest the very word. You see Mr. St. John brings business even into my parlors. I'll see you out, Mr. Bainbridge. [*They retire.*]

ST. J. *St. J. and Fra. seating themselves. Sowld. at side, writing in note-book.*] Before talking business, Mr. Frary, wont you go down into the dining-room with me and have some champagne?

FRA. Champagne, sir, is a liquor admirably calculated to inspirit even Job in the midst of his misfortunes, but for the present, no. You want me to tell you about the sources of my income. Well, sir, they are the eternal oil-fountains of this planet. I am convinced that my wells never will run dry. Other men's may—mine, never.

ST. J. Where are they situated? [*Taking seat.*]

FRA. In and about Fraropolis, sir. Your not familiar with the city? No? Well, it's a place of

ten thousand inhabitants; it has theatres, hotels, banks, and a daily newspaper, but when I first saw the town, it—well, it wasn't delightful. In fact, sir, it was the darndest ill-begotten location for a town you ever saw. It was then called Mackerel Corner. What in thunder the inhabitants ever bestowed such a name on their town for, I don't know, when there wasn't a mackerel within five hundred miles, unless he'd been previously salted; but be that as it may, the inhabitants of Mackerel Corner never saw the fish, salt or fresh, that gave their town its beautiful name. The whole assembled township didn't have money enough to buy two fins, if mackerel had been ten cents a barrel, for they were the dog-gonedest set of people I ever saw. They passed their time cursing their own miserable existence. They neither had eyes to see, nor brains to understand, for they were walking, sir, they were walking—I believe, St. John, I will have some champagne. It makes me dry to think of it.

ST. J. [*Rising and going to bell, which he rings,*] Certainly. You need it.

FRA. [*Walking up and down and gesticulating.*] The infernal fools were walking every day over a mine of wealth, and they never knew it. [*Enter servant with wine. Fra. takes glass and drains it at one gulp. Fills his glass again and drinks more.*] Ah! Yes, sir, they never knew it. The town was on a hill-side, and a little further up the hill it was springy, and whenever it rained there came out of the soil a gummy sort of substance, that made that water brackish. They didn't know what it was—I did. [*Takes more champagne.*] Well, when I first struck Mackerel Corner I was in the condition of Peter at Ephesus—gold and scrip had I none—in fact I hadn't even a poor counterfeit. I was busted. But I was a handy man, and I did a little of everything. I did carpenter-work and general chores, and I commenced to buy land. You see you could buy it for anything. I've mended a cart-wheel for a five-acre piece of hillside. That five-acre lot stands me in to-day [*reflecting*] for a profit of just one million three hundred thousand dollars!

ST. J. You don't mean it?

FRA. I do, sir, for a fact. Well, the neighbors thought I was mad. The children used to call me "mad Frary," and set their dogs on me. But I minded my business. Finally I thought I owned

enough land, and I began to bore. [*Pauses and takes another drink.*] I worked alone, and it was the eleventh day, and noon. All at once, up at the top of the shaft, there came a black lot of stuff—Great Lord! I think I see it now! [*Wipes his brow.*]

ST. J. It was oil?

FRA. You're right, sir, and it flowed so strong that there were not enough barrels in Mackerel Corner—not half enough—to catch it in as it run, and a great deal of the stuff was lost. But the neighbors turned out, and before night there wasn't a utensil in that town, from a pig's trough to a child's pap-bowl, that wasn't filled with oil. To cut a long story short, sir, I own to-day sixteen wells in and about Fraropolis, and my income from them is twenty-five hundred dollars a day.

ST. J. Is it possible? And may I ask how long this has been going on?

FRA. Two years and a half, sir.

ST. J. Do I understand that you are at this moment piling up a fortune at this rate?

FRA. You do, sir.

ST. J. [*Rising and taking hand of Fra.*] My dear sir, I congratulate you. By the side of this our paltry little incomes look mean enough.

FRA. Well, now, sir, I am told that you are the smartest man in this city in handling money. I want you to handle mine for me. What do you say?

ST. J. [*Musing for a moment.*] It's a great responsibility, Mr. Frary.

FRA. Oh, I'll take my chances with you.

ST. J. Mr. Frary, some of us on the street are about embarking in an enterprise that promises remarkably well. If you please, beside investing your money in it, I can make you the head of the concern—its president, or whatever you want to be.

FRA. What is it?

ST. J. It is the Boundary Upgrade Railroad. The road is projected to run from a point on the boundary line between British America and the United States, a little west of Lake Superior, northward to Hudson's Bay. Its capital is twenty-five millions.

FRA. That's moderate.

ST. J. A grant of alternate sections of land along the route is given by the Dominion government, which the general public understands to be rich in copper and silver mines. [*Pausing, and stroking chin.*] Perhaps it's as well for the present to leave

the general public with that impression. Then we have by our charter the option of two routes, and the route which it is generally supposed we shall adopt I presume won't be chosen.

FRA. But isn't that a little tough on the inhabitants along the line of the road?

ST. J. My dear sir, there are no inhabitants along the line of the road.

FRA. The devil! How do you expect—

ST. J. One moment! Mr. Frary, when you have been as long in active and leading business as I, you will know that there are two classes of enterprises in this country. The first is for the public benefit. This generally beggars the men who first go into it, while those who come after them make the money. The second is for private benefit. Here the first set of men make the money and their successors are beggared.

FRA. And this scheme belongs—

ST. J. To the second class, my dear sir.

FRA. You know—damn it, St. John, the long long and short of it is, that I don't want to engage in a scheme to scoop the public. What's the use; I've got money enough.

ST. J. I beg your pardon, Mr. Frary. On Wall street the public is a purely secondary consideration. And this is no question of scooping the public, as you put it. When the proper time comes we simply unload. That is all. It's no question of morals; it's one of financiering—and a business life of forty years has convinced me that morals and financiering have no connection whatever. But, the question is, will you look into this matter?

FRA. Well, I'll think of it.

ST. J. By the way, come over with me and dine at the club to-night. We'll talk it over.

FRA. Well, I'll see. [*Going toward door.*]

ST. J. If you've no engagement now I'll walk a block with you. [*Crosses to Sowld, and in a low voice.*] I think you may write to those parties that the thing looks favorably. Do you understand?

SOWLD. Certainly, sir. [*Ex. Fra. and St. J.*] [*Solus*] Do I understand? Yes, I should say I did. That man treats me like a mere machine, a sort of writing apparatus of a higher order. Do I understand. Well, I fancy, Mr. Henry St. John, there is no one of your schemes I don't understand. Ah! [*looking through open door*] Toinette! I'll not notice her. [*Resumes writing in note book.*] [*Enter*

Toinette, who busies herself as if looking for something on floor. Then Sowlld, not noticing her, she finally coughs to attract his attention.]

SOWLLD. [*Starting up as if astonished.*] Ah! Toinette, when did you come in? I didn't see you.

TOIN. Zee's ees Monsieur Sole, I belief.

SOWLLD. Yes, my bird; you ought to know. How do you like your place here, Mignonne? [*going up to her and putting his arm around her waist.*]

TOIN. Eet ees datestahble! I do not like ze madame. She ees cold, distrait. And zen Antoine—she has sent away Antoine, because she said—vat you call it—he was too intime wiz me! Oh! I will pay you for zat! I will pay you!

SOWLLD. Ah! [*leaving Toin.*] Happy thought! My dear, what would you do if I told you something that would put both your master and mistress in your power and give you a lot of money—a lot of it?

TOIN. Monsieur Sowlld, vat you want of me?

SOWLLD. Oh, be gentle, be gentle, ma chere Toinette; let me see what kind of a letter you can write. [*Tears leaf out of note-book and gives Toinette pencil. She sits at table, Sowlld looking over her shoulder.*]

TOIN. Vat sall I write?

SOWLLD. I'll tell you; write this [*dictating*]. Have you noticed—

TOIN. Ave you notice—

SOWLLD. How intimate your wife is with Lawrence Bainbridge—

TOIN. [*With animation.*] Ah! Ah! Je comprends.

SOWLLD. Question her about her past and present relations with him. She will not dare to answer. Now let me see how you've written. [*Takes note and looks at it.*] That's very well: The spelling is a little off, but that's so much the better. Now make a copy of that in a different writing, if you can. [*Toin takes paper and writes. After a moment, she gives note to Sowlld.*] That's capital, Toinette; the devil has been very bountiful to you.

TOIN. Vat you mean by dat?

SOWLLD. Oh, my angel! It isn't necessary for us to go into particulars.

TOIN. But how sall I get monee by zis? How sall I get monsieur and madame in my powah, eh?

SOWLLD. As for the money [*takes bank-note out of pocket and gives to her*], here's twenty dollars; this is only the first instalment. You ought'nt to ask that, Toinette, for virtue's it's own reward, you know. Now can you get that into the old man's

hands without his having any suspicion from whom it comes?

TOIN. Ze ole man? Ah? Monsieur St. Jean. Oui, oui; you sall not fear.

SOWLLD. All right, my dear. I rely on that finesse which always characterizes the French. [*Going.*] Adieu, my angel! Just a bit of a kiss. [*kisses her.*] Remember! Twenty dollars a letter, and I'll furnish the material. [*Aside.*] Mrs. St. John, we will see whether I'm to remain your husband's private secretary or you're to remain his wife, the longer. We shall see. [*Exit.*]

TOIN. [*Standing at table, and thinking.*] I will leave this in ze conservatoire. Non! Zat will not do. Some one in ze maison would be suspecte. I know. [*Suddenly.*] I will wait till Monsieur walks in ze conservatoire and zen trow it in. He will sink some one from outside has done it. And I sink he will walk dere ver soon, too. Madame, I will teach you not to be so cold and haughty to me, and not to insult me. What if I did know Antoine? Had I not ze right? Antoine, mon cher, I vill revenge you?

ST. J. [*Entering and seating himself.*] At last I'm somewhere near the realization of my ambition. This man is the easiest caught fish I ever angled for. His five millions—two millions of my own—seven millions, and all cash! I can say, like Monte Cristo in the play, the whole world is mine. [*Paus-ing.*] How heavy the odor of those tube-roses in the conservatory is. I'll open one of the windows. [*Goes back into the conservatory and throws back sliding window. In an instant starts back, as if struck by something.*] What does this mean? Some gamin throwing stones through my windows. [*Stoops and picks up note rolled round small pebble.*] Well upon my honor! [*Walking into parlor.*] The amazing impudence of the thing! I'll see [*unrolling the note.*] Shall one of my servants dares to correspond with a lover in this way? No address. A woman's handwriting. What is this? [*Reads.*] "Have you noticed how intimate your wife is with Lawrence Bainbridge? Question her about her past and present relations with him. She will not dare to answer." Oh no! it can't be. Madeleine would never—[*Leaning on the table for support.*] And yet people said there was something between them years ago—but no, no, no. My wife untrue to me! What folly! And what a fool I am!

(CURTAIN FALLS.)

TABLEAU III.

AN EVENING CALL.

Rooms of Laurence Bainbridge on Fifth ave.; at side, door opening into bedroom; book-cases; fireplace; table C, with study-lamp; in corner large folding-screen; Bain. and Fra. discovered, smoking.

FRA. Yes, Bainbridge, the high tides and the low tides keep us fresh. I've had more experiences than most men.

BAIN. I can swear to one you've had.

FRA. The bear? Yes, sir [*rising and walking back and forth*], mauled almightily I should have been if it hadn't been for you and Mortlake, sir. But that was a mere episode. I've been everything; second mate of a Mississippi steamboat before the war—[*sighing*]*—ah! that was the time to live!—end man of a minstrel troupe—I played the bones; fighting editor on a newspaper, and now a capitalist! Look here, Bainbridge, I reckon I must be worth five millions of dollars.*

BAIN. Well, Frary, how have you got it invested, if you'll pardon the question.

FRA. Haven't got it invested at all. Most every bank in Western Canada is full of it. But I've given St. John a power of attorney to invest it.

BAIN. [*Starting up in wonder.*] You don't mean to say that you, a sane man, a shrewd man, have given Henry St. John power to handle all your money!

FRA. I do, sir. I regard him as the smartest man in this town, and if he can't do better investing my money than I could myself, my name's not Gilead W. Frary.

BAIN. [*Reseating himself.*] [*Aside.*] What a compound this man is! But haven't you any plans, any ideas, for the investment of a certain part of it, at least?

FRA. [*Taking seat and lighting cigar.*] Yes, I propose to start a newspaper for one thing.

BAIN. Daily or weekly?

FRA. Hourly, sir. I'll have an edition every sixty minutes, and there shan't a crowned head in Europe

cough, or a Western hoosier grow a big number of bushels of corn to the acre, that the "Universe"—that's what I propose to call it—the "Universe" shan't state both facts with absolute impartiality.

BAIN. I should say you might dispose of a million and a half to two millions in that. Is there anything else?

FRA. Yes, sir, a theater. Frary's Theater shall compete with the Fronsay.

BAIN. Indeed! How is your theater to be conducted?

FRA. I propose to have two companies. I'll have Edwin Booth for leading man of one, and, well, some such actor as Fechter for leading man of the other. No poor actor or actress shall be allowed in either. Salary will be no object with me. I've got money enough; I'm going in for high art.

BAIN. Upon my word your ideas are in proportion to the size of your pocket! [*Knock at door. Bain rises and admits Mortlake*].

FRA. My young English aristocrat, how are you? [*Rising, and taking Mortlake's hand*].

MORT. Not well. Blues. Such devilish weather.

FRA. Weather! It's heaven itself, sir, compared with your damned island. Over there it's ten months rain, seven weeks fog and a week of cloudy weather every year. But why ain't you at the opera to-night?

MORT. [*Taking cigar and seating himself*]. Wanted to ask Bainbridge —

FRA. [*Rising to go*]. Which means. "Gilead W. Frary, your room for the time is better than your company. Clear out." I fly.

MORT. No, no! Stay. Want your help.

FRA. Is that all? Why [*taking out check-book*], how much? Five hundred?

MORT. Not that, Frary. Many thanks, though; want your moral aid.

FRA. Young man, you shall have it! Anything that Gilead W. Frary can do for the aid of one of the saviors of his life, he will do. Bet your pile on that! What is it, young man?

MORT. Bainbridge, you know.—

BAIN. Yes, I know, Ronald. You love Phillis.

FRA. So do I. So does every man that knows her. She's fresh as a daisy, and sweet as a tea-rose. God bless her!

MORT. Thank you, Frary. Knew you'd help me.

BAIN. Ronald, do you think it's fair to ask a young

girl, situated as Phillis has been, to marry you. You must consider, my dear boy, how little of the world she knows yet. You may not be the man she would choose, after she has been a little more into society.

MORT. I know. You're right. [*Mournfully.*]

BAIN. Socially, you're everything she could ask for; but isn't it fairer to her to wait a year or two, Ronald?

FRA. Well, now Bainbridge, you can't tell. She's as likely to know what she wants now as she ever will be. Gentlemen, you can't tell a darned thing about a woman! You never knew, I suppose, that I used to teach school [*putting legs on table*]? I did. It was six miles out of Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Kalamazoo wasn't at that time the blooming paradise it has since become. I can tell you. Being schoolmaster I was district beau, and there was one girl I was sweet on particularly. So was Jim Berry. Jim was the best man in Kalamazoo at a rough and tumble, and one morning, just as I'd got through reading the Bible to 'em I saw him standing in the door. I knew what that meant. It meant a row. Jim looked at me a minute; said he, "Phemie Keller"—that was the girl we were both courting—"Phemie Keller sent me down here to thrash you. She says you've insulted her." "Jim Berry," I said, "you're a liar, and this is a public school-house. Get out!" Quicker than a flash he was at me. Well, it took me fifteen minutes to complete that contract, and it was the toughest job I ever did. You couldn't tell one of us from the other half the time. When it was over I found myself arrayed in a state of nature and the tattered remnants of a long-tailed gray coat. That was all. Now the details of this fight don't seem to have much to do with the matter in hand, but what I'm coming at is, that Phemie Keller really did send him down to thrash me, but for all that she married me before a year was over—and was as good a wife—well, boys, we'll pass that [*dashing hand across eyes*].

MORT. You're right, Bainbridge. I'll wait. Only give me a fair field, then.

BAIN. [*Putting hand on Mort.'s shoulder*]. You know, Ronald, you needn't ask that. If it were my choice, alone, you know what the answer would be.

FRA. Now, boys, don't get sentimental. Don't! Come with me and try the cheering effect of a little of Mr. Delmonico's champagne [*Rising and moving towards the door*].

hands without his having any suspicion from whom it comes?

TOIN. Ze ole man? Ah? Monsieur St. Jean. Oui, oui; you sall not fear.

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girl, situated as Phillis has been, to marry you. You must consider, my dear boy, how little of the world she knows yet. You may not be the man she would choose, after she has been a little more into society.

MORT. I know. You're right. [*Mournfully.*]

BAIN. Socially, you're everything she could ask for; but isn't it fairer to her to wait a year or two, Ronald?

FRA. Well, now Bainbridge, you can't tell. She's as likely to know what she wants now as she ever will be. Gentlemen, you can't tell a darned thing about a woman! You never knew, I suppose, that I used to teach school [*putting legs on table*]? I did. It was six miles out of Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Kalamazoo wasn't at that time the blooming paradise it has since become, I can tell you. Being schoolmaster I was district beau, and there was one girl I was sweet on particularly. So was Jim Berry. Jim was the best man in Kalamazoo at a rough and tumble, and one morning, just as I'd got through reading the Bible to 'em I saw him standing in the door. I knew what that meant. It meant a row. Jim looked at me a minute; said he, "Phemie Keller"—that was the girl we were both courting—"Phemie Keller sent me down here to thrash you. She says you've insulted her." "Jim Berry," I said, "you're a liar, and this is a public school-house. Get out!" Quicker than a flash he was at me. Well, it took me fifteen minutes to complete that contract, and it was the toughest job I ever did. You couldn't tell one of us from the other half the time. When it was over I found myself arrayed in a state of nature and the tattered remnants of a long-tailed gray coat. That was all. Now the details of this fight don't seem to have much to do with the matter in hand, but what I'm coming at is, that Phemie Keller really did send him down to thrash me, but for all that she married me before a year was over—and was as good a wife—well, boys, we'll pass that [*dashing hand across eyes*].

MORT. You're right, Bainbridge. I'll wait. Only give me a fair field, then.

BAIN. [*Putting hand on Mort.'s shoulder*]. You know, Ronald, you needn't ask that. If it were my choice, alone, you know what the answer would be.

FRA. Now, boys, don't get sentimental. Don't! Come with me and try the cheering effect of a little of Mr. Delmonico's champagne [*Rising and moving towards the door*].

MORT. [*Also rising.*] I'll go with you. Won't you come, Laurence?

BAIN. You'll have to excuse me to-night. I've some correspondence to attend to.

MORT. Well, good night. [*Ex. Bain. seats himself at table, takes pen and commences to turn over papers.*]

BAIN. What a strange man! But with a heart like a purse of gold. I don't like his getting into St. John's clutches. Yet St. John, they say, is honest. He will use——[*listening*]. Was that a woman's step I thought I heard in the hall? It's Madeleine's! [*Half rises and listens.*] No, Madeleine wouldn't have the hardihood, or be so foolish as to come here. What a devil she is! Cold as an icicle in her love for me and in her crimes, she is the same still, and yet she pursues me with the fury of a very Sappho [*starting*]. Again! I must see what that can be. [*Rises and moves toward door. It opens and enter Mrs. St. J. in cloak and hood. She throws them back.*] What madness is this, Madeleine? Have you quite lost your senses, that you come to my rooms alone at night?

MRS. ST. J. I don't know, and I don't want to know, Lawrence. I don't care, and I don't want to care. You wrote me to-day, saying that you would not call at my house again. Why did you write? I've come to ask you.

BAIN. I wrote to save your name from scandal, Mrs. St. John. People will say——

MRS. ST. J. What do I care what people will say? Years ago you showed me what you were. You shall never repeat that, Lawrence Bainbridge.

BAIN. The woman is stark, staring mad. [*Seats himself at table, resting head on hands.*]

MRS. ST. J. There is method enough in my madness at least, Lawrence, to keep you from one thing. I have lost you, but no other woman shall win you, I swear.

BAIN. Now I recognize the angelic sweetness that always characterized Mrs. St. John. Keep on. This thing becomes you greatly.

MRS. ST. J. [*Standing at his shoulder.*] You insult me, but you don't answer me. I say that no other woman shall have you.

BAIN. [*Starting up*] My God, Madeleine, what do you mean by that. You ought to know—you, better than anyone else, that it is impossible for any other woman to have me, as you say. I—oh I was a fool,

but I'm willing to bear on my own shoulders the burden of your shame, and never to speak. But one thing I command of you, that once and for all you cease this persecution. I have right enough over you to at least say that.

MRS. ST. J. Once more we have been friends; and I have gotten to look to you for that appreciation denied me by my---by Mr. St. John. You shall not desert me again.

BAIN. And therefore I am to continue coming to your house till all the world cries out.

MRS. ST. J. I care nothing for your comings or goings—but I know—oh, I know the reason of all this solicitude about my good name—a name you never cared for.

BAIN. More than you ever did yourself.

MRS. ST. J. It is Phillis Lamont. I saw it from the very first. You shall never marry her. Be sure of that.

BAIN. Jealousy! After all this woman has done she is actually jealous. [*Laughs.*]

MRS. ST. J. Laugh if you please, but I tell you—

BAIN. [*Grasping her arm.*] Hark! there is some one coming up-stairs. Perhaps he's coming here. Step behind that screen. [*She steps behind screen. Bain, seats himself at table. Knocking.*]

BAIN. Come in. [*Enter St. J.*]

ST. J. I—I thought I'd come up and see you to-night, Bainbridge? Are you quite alone?

BAIN. As you see, Mr. St. John [*turns down study-lamp and adjusts shade*] As you see, and what gives me the pleasure of this late call from you?

ST. J. I thought I would come—I wanted to tell you—

BAIN. I am always glad to see you, Mr. St. John, when Wall street can spare you to us. I have [*looking at watch*] an engagement in five minutes, but I'm delighted to chat with you a moment.

ST. J. An engagement, eh? A lady, perhaps.

BAIN. Yes, you're right. A lady.

ST. J. Well, I wanted to talk to you about a lady, too. About my wife.

BAIN. Ah, indeed; about Mrs. St. John. Well, my dear sir, I'll answer very frankly any question I can about Mrs. St. John, but I don't really see what in the world I can tell you.

ST. J. You've known my wife for a long time?

BAIN. Eight years.

ST. J. Yes, yes. Old friends. And, I think, they said at one time you thought——

BAIN. At one time, Mr. St. John, I thought—but no matter what I thought; its all over now. That was eight years ago.

ST. J. And there was nothing in it?

BAIN. My dear sir, how could there be?

ST. J. Of course, of course. You will think it very strange, my asking you these questions, but I've been very much troubled lately. I have been receiving anonymous notes——

BAIN. Anonymous notes! Good heavens, about what?

ST. J. Here they are. [*Taking notes out of coat pocket.*] I'll read them. The first is [*reading*]: "Have you noticed how intimate your wife is with Lawrence Bainbridge? Question her about her past and present relations with him. She will not dare to answer." That's the first. [*Gives note to Bain.*] Here's the second: "Your wife gets thicker and thicker with Lawrence Bainbridge every day. You're a fool that you don't see it. Ask her about their secret." Now you know I estimate anonymous notes at their true value, but—I'm very proud of my wife, and——

BAIN. I understand, sir; any man would act as you do.

ST. J. I think the best thing, without saying anything to Madeleine, who must never suspect anything——

BAIN. Never suspect——

ST. J. Would be for you to be a little less frequent in your visits, and——

BAIN. Mr. St. John, I'm sure nobody suspects what you know to be an absurdity, but I'm very sorry for having innocently put you in a position where you're the prey of some anonymous black-mailer, and from this moment, I assure you, you shall have no cause to complain of me. I wish—I wish Mrs. St. John were present to hear me say it.

ST. J. And so do I. [*Rising and taking hand of Bain.*] It's a very kind thing for you to take this talk of mine so sensibly. I appreciate it Bainbridge.

BAIN. Not at all, St. John. I understand you.

ST. J. I have to keep her name and my honor free from suspicion, of course. Cæsar's wife, you know. But [*rising*] I won't bore you in this way. [*Looking around.*] Snug quarters you have here, eh?

BAIN. Yes; would you like to look into the bedroom? [*They go to the bedroom door and look in.*] Can he suspect something? [*aside.*]

ST. J. Very pleasant and cosy. The screen, I suppose——

BAIN. Oh, that conceals something that used to be very dear to me, but it is so no longer.

ST. J. Yes, yes, I see. Mementoes of the past. Well, Bainbridge, we bury our illusions one by one.

BAIN. Yes, indeed we do.

ST. J. Now you understand I have no jealousy at all, Bainbridge, merely ——

BAIN. Quite right, Mr. St. John, I see.

ST. J. And this secret? But what nonsense! Of course there can be no secret at all. I'm a fool. [*Laughing.*]

BAIN. None at all. Question Mrs. St. John, if you choose, when you get home. She will tell you there is none.

ST. J. Certainly, certainly, but I've kept you from your engagement too long. Good night. No, you need not come down with me. Good night. [*Exit St. J.*]

BAIN. [*Going to screen and throwing it back.*] Mrs. St. John, I hope you are fully satisfied now with your work! [*Assisting her to rise and helping her to chair.*] And in God's name how is it that anybody knows enough of all this to write about our secret. Can you tell?

MRS. ST. J. Oh no, oh no! I cannot. No one knew it except Janet, my maid, and she is dead. Who could it have been?

BAIN. No matter who it was, its now necessary for you and I to be at arm's length hereafter. Your husband had his suspicions of something when he looked over these rooms. Now you must go, do you understand, so that you may be at home when he gets there. Come! [*Goes up to her.*] What! she's fainted! She has a little feeling, then!

(CURTAIN FALLS.)

TABLEAU IV.

THE STORY OF A SECRET.

*Garden of Mrs. Suncliffe's house at Englewood.
Frery, Mrs. Sun. and Phil. discovered. Phil.
sitting on bench arranging bouquet.*

FRA. So you didn't know I'd been an actor?

MRS. S. No. When was it?

FRA. It was a long while ago, in Vincennes, Indiana. I played Polonius, in Hamlet. You see the Mayor, a man by the name of Bill Skillings, had an ambition to play something and the corporation tendered him a public benefit. First, he thought he'd play Richeloo, but finally he struck on Hamlet. I tell you, Madame, that was a soul inspiring spectacle —

PHIL. What was?

FRA. Oh, the whole thing. You see the corporation attended the show in a body, and behind them was the fire brigade in uniform. The house was crammed. Behind the fire brigade sat the citizens in full dress. Well, ladies, we began. I never could understand it, but that corporation laughed. They laughed at Hamlet. They laughed at the ghost, they laughed at me—[*Phil. and Mrs. Sun. laugh*], and you're laughing just as they did. Now why is that? That entertainment might have done credit to the Metropolitan boards. But the audience hadn't any more sense of what was fine acting than a lot of sheep looking through a fence on a western prairie.

PHIL. Perhaps your acting was too good for them.

FRA. That was it, Miss Phillis, that was it. They didn't comprehend us, and the thing finally ended by the fire department uncoupling their machine and throwing two streams of water on the stage. We hadn't contracted to play Noah, and so we adjourned that entertainment.

MRS. S. I wish I could have been there, Mr. Frery.

FRA. I wish you had, Madame. Ah [*catching sight of Humphrey Nowark and Lucius Nowark, who enter*] here are Montezuma and Apotheosis. Good day, boys, good day.

H. and L. N. [*in same breath.*] Good afternoon, ladies. Good afternoon, patron. [*They talk with ladies.*]

FRA. [*Aside.*] The devilish bores! Madame [*to Mrs. Sun.*] You have'nt shown me those—what is it—cactuses yet.

MRS. S. Come now, Mr. Frary. [*Moving off stage.*]

H. N. [*Aside.*] The very opportunity! [*Aloud.*] I will accompany you. I always had a weakness for cacti.

FRA. Oh Lord! [*Ex. Mrs. S., Frary and H. W.*]

L. N. [*Seating himself by side of Phil.*] Miss Lamont—may I call you Phillis?

PHIL. Certainly, Mr. Lucius, if you wish to. [*Aside.*] What in the world can he be going to do now?

L. N. My brother and I have come to speak to you about a very important matter Miss Phillis.

PHIL. Indeed, Mr. Lucius, and what may that be?

L. N. My brother Humphrey—my brother Humphrey—Phillis.—

PHIL. Is he [*laughing*¹ still at work, Mr. Lucius?

L. N. He's absolutely crushed 'neath the weight of toil, Phillis.

PHIL. Oh, I'm so sorry to know he's crushed, Mr. Lucius. He didn't look crushed when he left us a moment ago.

L. N. Yesterday, Phillis,—oh my sweet sister—I may almost call you so— Humphrey told me a secret. I will tell it to you.

PHIL. But perhaps it wouldn't be right, Mr. Lucius, for you to tell Mr. Humphrey's secret.

L. N. Oh, Phillis, this concerns you.

PHIL. Concerns me? Why how can that be?

L. N. My brother Humphrey—a noble fellow is Humphrey, Phillis—loves you with all the ardent love of that at once artistic and devotional temperament.

PHIL. Does he? You mean he likes me very much? I'm glad of that.

L. N. You're glad! So glad! May I, may I bid him hope?

PHIL. Bid him hope? Why of course you may. Mr. Dyson used to say that hope was everything in this world.

L. N. [*Taking her hands.*] Phillis, you will make Humphrey the happiest of men. He brings you

the devotion of a virgin heart. Let me hasten to call him here, that he may know the joy that awaits him. [*Turns to go, and just as he retires, encounters H. N. entering*].

PHIL. What can all this mean?

L. N. [*Aside to H. N. clasping his hands*]. Brother, she is yours. Go and take her.

H. N. No, yours, brother. I surrender my claim. [*Ex. L. N.*].

[*Humphrey advances*]. What a charming sight! Youth, beauty and simplicity!

PHIL. He's coming to tell me that Lucius adores me.

H. N. You are happy here, Miss Phillis?

PHIL. Of course I am. Aren't you?

H. N. Yes, yes, the artist is happy with every bit of sunshine, but the poet—Miss Phillis, dear Miss Phillis, my brother is not happy. I came to speak of him.

PHIL. [*With a sigh*]. I thought so. [*Aside*]. Oh, dear.

H. N. Lucius is a noble fellow. His life ought to be lightened by some influence like yours. And he has a secret.

PHIL. Yes?

H. N. Lucius, my dear Miss Phillis, adores the smallest speck of earth on which even the shadow of a ribbon attached to your dress has fallen.

PHIL. That's so good of him. I thought you were going to say that.

H. N. You thought so! And he may hope? Oh, what a poetic devotion shall be yours.

PHIL. [*Rising*]. Well! Now we've had enough of devotion, and secrets and all that. Let's be real! Come. Let's find Aunt Agatha. [*Moves away, H. N. following, and just as she is about to retire, enter Mortlake*]. Oh Jack, I'm so glad to see you.

H. N. Ah, a rival of Lucius. I must go and tell him. [*Exit*].

MORT. I'm glad to see you, Phil.

PHIL. What shall I do to entertain you? Shall I play to you, shall we talk—

MORT. Yes, we'll talk, Phil.

PHIL. Jack, you don't look happy; what's the matter?

MORT. Nothing; nothing. Might have expected it.

PHIL. What is it Jack; tell me? Let's sit here. [*Sitting down.*]

MORT. Don't know how to tell you. Don't see how I can begin.

PHIL. Oh, begin somehow, Jack.

MORT. Yesterday I had a talk with Bainbridge about—about you, you know; and he wants me to see you less—not to come here so often.

PHIL. But why, Jack?

MORT. That I can't tell you. You know I've been wrong from the start. Oughtn't to have come here so much.

PHIL. But why not, Jack? What's wrong about it? You know, if you tell me, that will be worth all the rest.

MORT. Why, can't you see Phil, you dear girl, that—I love you.

PHIL. But I know all about that, Jack.

MORT. No, child; you don't know anything about it. It's not the love you have for other people I mean.

PHIL. Tell me—tell me, Jack, if it's like this sort of feeling I have for you; I can't sometimes sleep thinking of you; I think of you all the time, Jack, and if you don't come here as you have—I think I shall die, really I do.

MORT. Phil, darling, I believe—I know you love me; dear little girl, the first time I ever saw you—do you remember—you gave me a bunch of violets. They've all faded and withered now, but I've kept them, Phil, because you gave them to me. Darling, let me care for you, just as I've cared for them, won't you?

PHIL. You're so good, Jack——

MORT. No, Phil; when you know more of the world you'll see that I'm not good, that I'm not strong as you think me, but I will care for you so tenderly, dear——

PHIL. Oh, I know it, Jack. I know you will. I don't want to know any more of the world than I do now. Jack, you can have me if you want me. [*Putting her hand to her eyes.*]

MORT. [*Kissing her.*] Oh, Phil, I'm the happiest fellow in the world. [*Re-enter Fra. and Mrs. Sun. Fray talking in dumb show. As he catches sight of Mort. and Phillis he raises his voice.*]

FRA. So I said to him, St. John, you're a fool; I know your wife does not care about him, and as for Bainbridge, there's not a more honorable fellow in the world." [*Appearing to see Phil. and Mort. for the first time.*] Why, my dear, I believe you've

been crying! [*Turning to Mort. and putting hand on his shoulder.*) Young man, perhaps it's none of my business, but if you don't treat this little girl as she deserves to be treated—and that's as gently as you'd treat a delicate flower—you deserve—Miss Phillis, of course he will, [*taking her hands and looking at her*] for we all fall in love with you at first sight. [*Phil. disengages herself and runs to Mrs. Sun.. They walk away.*] No wonder you look sheepish, young man. She's as much better than you are, as an angel is better than one of Satan's imps.

MORT. I know it Frary; I know it. But where have they gone. [*Fra. sits on bench.*]

FRA. Oh, follow them. [*Exit Mort.*] Now there's a young fellow going the way of all flesh. Well, I've been there myself, and candor compels me to state that the condition is not without its pleasures as well as its pains. It's like wearing a pair of new boots, very pleasing to the understanding, but hurting one's feelings more or less all the time. [*Pausing a moment.*] I wonder if St. John was drunk. He acted as if he was. Talked about notes, and insisted on seeing Bainbridge. Bainbridge can't have been giving St. John notes for discount. What does he want to borrow money for? The thing is queer. He must have been tight. But I never saw him drink anything to speak of. [*Enter Bainbridge.*]

BAIN. Well, Frary, what are you musing about?

FRA. There's something the matter with St. John. He don't seem to have any more sense than a Missouri exhorter with a bad attack of chills. He seems dazed, somehow.

BAIN. What do you mean? I saw him last night and he was certainly all right then.

FRA. He talks about notes, and Bainbridge. Have you been borrowing money of him? Why didn't you come to me?

BAIN. Notes? Ah! I see. Frary, some devil has been writing the man anonymous letters, charging his wife and me—

FRA. [*Starting up.*] The damned scoundrel! Can't you tell who it is?

BAIN. Of course I can't. I'd wring his neck if I could.

FRA. Now I understand his asking me if I'd ever noticed anything strange about his wife's manner when she was with you. [*Starting up.*] Bainbridge,

I'm going over to New York and straighten this thing out. I believe, sir, that this thing's affecting his head. I'll go this minute? All my money—[*Ex. Frary.*]

BAIN. I wonder who the writer of those notes can be. How can they know that strange history? And can St. John's brain be affected? Nonsense! Frary's scared, that's all. [*Re-enter Phil.*]

PHIL. I want to tell you something, Mr. Bainbridge.

BAIN. Well, come here and tell it, Phillis. [*They seat themselves on bench.*] Now, what is it, my dear?

PHIL. [*Hesitatingly.*] About Jack Mortlake.

BAIN. Yes, Phil. My dear, you're very young. You know nothing of the world. Don't you think, now, that you'd better wait awhile.

PHIL. Oh, but I just promised.

BAIN. No matter. Jack is a gentleman. He'll give you back your promise, I know. [*Phil shakes her head.*] No? But are you sure of yourself? Are you sure you love him?

PHIL. I can tell you, can't I, without being ashamed? I think of him all the time, I pray for him every night, when he's away from me I want him near me, when he's with me I can't bear to have him go—

BAIN. Wait, Phil. I'll tell the rascal he may come when he pleases, and marry you to-morrow, if he wants to.

PHIL. Oh, you make me so happy. I'm sure Jack will thank you. [*Starts to go.*] Let me go and tell him.——

BAIN. Oh! the beggar is here, is he? Phillis, Jack Mortlake's a happy man. Frary says we all love you at first sight, and I think it's a fact. I'm so old, you know, and Jack—[*clearing his throat*]. But nobody could be near you very long without loving you. Well, Phil.. just give me a kiss, because I'm your guardian, you know, and then you shall go and find Jack. [*She stoops and kisses him, then turns to go, when later, behind them—Mrs. St. John.*]

MRS. ST. J. Stop! [*to Phil*] You shall not go now. Wait and hear what I have got to say first.

BAIN. Madeleine! [*Starts up.*]

MRS. ST. J. Phillis Lamont, you dare to make love to this man before my very eyes! You shall know our secret. [*Enter St. John, who conceals himself behind shrubbery.*]

BAIN. Be careful, Madeleine. Remember, its not our secret—it's your own.

ST. J. [*Appearing for a moment.*] Ah! her secret. I shall know it—I shall know it.

MRS. ST. J. I shall not be careful, Lawrence. I told you, you remember, that you should make love to no other woman while I lived, and you shall not. [*Turning to Phil., who stands near Bain.*] Phillis Lamont, this man, who tells you he loves you, who takes you in his arms and kisses you, this excellent match, whom you're trying to ensnare, is——

BAIN. Madeleine!

MRS. ST. J. Is my husband. We were married six years ago, privately. But he is my husband, and only a few days after our marriage he left me. We quarreled.——

BAIN. Yes, Mrs. St. John, I think I would mention that fact. We quarreled. You were a devil then; you're a devil now!

MRS. ST. J. He used cruel language to me; then he left me. He gave me back my liberty.

BAIN. Phillis, you will not understand all this; but let me tell you. We were married; we quarreled; we separated, agreeing that things should be the same as they were before this marriage, which was really no marriage. She was to have her liberty. I went abroad. Then I found that my wife had indeed used the liberty I gave her in the widest sense. She had married again. I came here, because I thought that chapter of our lives was closed. My God, why hadn't I stayed away!

MRS. ST. J. He is my husband still. I claim him now. I want him now. Laurence, this girl can't love you as I do. You are mine; mine you shall stay. Can't it be so? [*After an instant.*] You make no answer. Laurence, Laurence, forgive me. Take me away; I never loved anyone but you, never anyone but you. [*She falls on her knees.*] Let me go with you, where you go. We'll go out of everyone's sight, we two. Oh, Laurence, take me back. My husband cares for nothing but his money-bags. I'll leave him; you are my real husband. Take me, Laurence. [*Sobbing. Enter St. John, who walks slowly and uncertainly to her and bends over her.*] You here? [*to St. John.*] And you have heard what I said? That is true. What I have told is true. He [*pointing to Bain*] is my husband. My life with you has been all a lie. Stand back [*rising*] and let me go to my husband.

ST. J. [*Grasping corner of bench for support*]. Is that—[*putting hand to forehead*.] Let me think. What did I want to say? Oh! Mr. Bainbridge, is what my w——, what this woman has said, true?

BAIN. It is true, so help me, God, St. John; but I never thought that you would know it.

ST. J. Then—why, those notes were true—[*commences to laugh*.] And I thought you were of ice [to Mrs. St. John], so cold, so pure! Oh, some night when I was sleeping beside you, why didn't you—[*commences to laugh again*]. I forgot! We don't do that sort of thing now-a-days. [Putting hand to forehead again.] My head's on fire! Madeline, I—I leave you. [Turns, and after taking a step or two, falls. All rush forward.]

BAIN. Let him have a chance to breathe. Run for some water, Phil. He'll be better in a moment. [Phil. runs out.] Ah! what's this note crushed in his hand? [Reads.] "You're a worse fool than ever. Your wife was hid in Bainbridge's rooms last night while you were there." Damnation! [To Mrs. St. J.] Do you hear that? [Reënter Phil. and Mort.]

MRS. ST. J. Why doesn't he get better? What is it?

BAIN. What is it? [After a moment.] Do you know what you've done? It's death!

CURTAIN FALLS.

TABLEAU V.

A STREAK OF LUCK.

Same as Tab. first. The twins discovered asleep as before.

H. N. Why! I've been asleep! [*Stretching.*]

L. A. Why! So have I! That's strange! How could it have happened, brother? [*Stretching.*]

H. N. Mental strain, brother Lucius, that severest of all labors, the labor of a poet, causes this lapse into the arms of Morpheus! Do you know, brother—what do you say [*going to closet and taking bottle and glass*] to a little invigoration?

L. N. I say, yes. Old Tom? Good! [*Takes bottle and glass, and drinks.*] Ah! [*Handing them to N. H., who drinks.*] This has been an eventful season for us, Humphrey.

H. N. It has indeed, brother.

L. N. You, Humphrey, have engaged yourself to be married.

H. N. I beg your pardon, Lucius, it is you who are engaged.

L. N. I am not, Humphrey. It is you who are engaged to Phillis Lamont. I am astonished at your wildness of statement.

H. N. Well now, Lucius, be reasonable. One or the other of us is certainly engaged. It can't be me. I proposed to the lady in your behalf, and she accepted you.

L. N. You labor, brother, under an entire misapprehension. I proposed for you, and you were accepted. I told her you brought to her a virgin heart. I told her you loved her as you loved the sunbeams of your pictures—which look as if they were painted in mud! [*Gesticulating.*]

H. N. I told her you were crushed with the weight of toil, but that toil was for her. I told her you loved her as you loved the creations of your poems—that you can't find a publisher for; and that read as if they were written by a journeyman wood-chopper. [*Gesticulating.*]

D. N. Humphrey!

H. N. Lucius!

L. N. Will you act like a man, and marry the girl?

H. N. Will you do your duty, and espouse Phillis Lamont?

BOTH. No!

H. N. Then go, false one, and break her heart with the announcement that you dare not wed her!

L. N. Go yourself, and blight her young life with the news that you retract your engagement.

H. N. Ah! Lucius, I have an idea! I wonder—but it can't be—it is, though—it is. Brother, did you notice anything peculiar in Phillis's manner to you the other day?

L. N. No, did you?

H. N. Lucius, a secret! [*Approaching him.*] She loves us both?

L. N. Unfortunate girl! We must be kind to her.

H. N. We will be. Brother, I think we have made a mutual mistake. I thought you wanted to marry her.

L. N. And I thought you did.

H. N. I remember nothing in fiction so startling!

L. N. Nor do I! We can't both marry her. Let's flip up for it, Humphrey.

H. N. That won't do, Lucius; we will neither of us marry her.

L. N. No, no. Marriage be hanged. Hereafter we will be free to woo, but not to wed.

H. N. To woo, but not to wed. Now let's seal that resolve in bumpers of glorious beer. [*Preparing to go.*]

L. N. [*Also going toward door.*] Let us do it. Marriage be hanged, Humphrey.

H. N. I echo the sentiment. But [*nudging L. N.*], oh, you gay Lothario, to trifle thus with a young girl's affections.

L. N. [*Doing the same to H. N.*] Oh, you bold, bad man, to make love when you don't mean it. [*Ex. Humphrey and L. N.*] [*As they retire enter Phil. and Mort.*]

PHIL. Oh, Jack, you should have seen the expression of her eyes. They'll haunt me till my dying day! Who would have thought she was such a wicked woman. Poor Mr. St. John! [*Weeping.*]

MORT. Don't cry, darling [*caressing her*]; no use at all. I'll keep my little woman away from such things in future, if I can.

PHIL. I know it, Jack; but, oh, it was so terrible to see him fall there.

MORT. [*Petting her.*] Try not to think of it, dear.

I'm going to keep everything disagreeable away from little Phil.

PHIL. No, Jack, no; I don't want you to do that. I'll try to meet everything disagreeable that comes. It will make more of a woman of me, and you know I want [*nestling close to him*] to be as much of a woman as I can be for your sake, Jack.

MORT. You can't be a much sweeter little woman, Phil. 'Tisn't possible; you know.

PHIL. Stupid! I don't know anything of the kind Jack, it seems to me—it seems to me as if, just as long as I love you and you love me, I shall grow better all the time, and you'll grow better. I suppose you are—I wouldn't admit it to any one but you—capable of a little improvement.

MORT. Oh, what a foolish girl!

PHIL. Jack, I want to walk. Since yesterday I can't keep still a moment, I'm so nervous. Come, we'll go up to the Park. [*They prepare to go, and just as they retire, enter Jos., Now., Fra. and Bain.*] Oh, Laurence, how is Mrs. St. John. [*Going up to him.*] Do you know I pity her so, that if I could help her at all I'd do it so gladly? [*Fra., J. N. and Bain talk together.*]

BAIN. No, Phil., you must not see her. She is in a dreadful state. I think from this time out she'll be a changed woman. But you're going walking? Well, poor child, you need the exercise. And I suppose, young man [*to Mort.*], that where she goes you'll go. Good-bye. [*Ex. Mort. and Phil.*] Well, Frary, what were you saying?

FRA. I was saying that this death of St. John leaves me as far adrift as a log in a Western over-flow. I don't know where I stand. I ain't sure that I stand at all. St. John's the only man that could tell, and he's dead. [*Enter servant, who hands Fra. telegram.*] What's this? My agent wires me: "All the oil wells on your property have stopped running." The devil they have! Well, good-bye, old wells! You didn't flow milk and honey, but something that was a darned sight more profitable. No matter; I've got a pile of money.

J. Now. Mr. Frary, how had St. John invested your money?

FRA. In Boundary Upgrades. Most of it, anyway.

J. Now. In Boundary Upgrades? Why they're falling off steadily.

FRA. I know that, but St. John must have sold out day before yesterday.

J. Now. Are you sure?

FRA. That was the plan. Oh, it's all right. I'm more troubled about those notes that killed the poor fellow. Nowark, if I had the man within reach that wrote those anonymous letters I'd dust him cleaner than an Iowa tornado ever dusted a prairie village. I wouldn't leave—I wouldn't leave enough of him to feed to a cat.

BAIN. And the worst of it is that these things may be kept up. I know St. John, if he could wish to-day, would wish the honor of the woman that bore his name, no matter that she had no right to it, untarnished. No one except ourselves knows what killed St. John; but how long will it be so? His child must have his property, his name be kept clean.

FRA. It's damnable. And who can tell us what's at the bottom of this?

SERVANT. [*Announcing*]. Mr. Ephraim Sowlld, sir.

SOWLLD. [*Entering*]. Good afternoon, gentlemen; good day, Mr. Frary. I'm the bearer of bad tidings. There's the worst break in the market Wall street ever saw. Upgrades are downgrades this time. We've irretrievably gone to smash.

BAIN. What do you mean?

SOWLLD. What do I mean? Just what I say. St. John and Company stopped payment to-day at noon.

Now. Failed!

SOWLLD. Yes, sir, failed. And I know their liabilities better than any man in the office, and they must be close on to five millions. I tell you it's a panic.

FRA. Busted! Well, I must have money enough outside the house to keep me in food and clothing for a year or two.

SOWLLD. Money enough? Why, Mr. Frary, every cent of your money St. John could lay his hands on is in Upgrades.

FRA. Why that can't be! St. John told me—

SOWLLD. I can't help that. It's all there.

FRA. But the plan was to close out day before yesterday.

SOWLLD. I know that, but something was the matter with St. John's head. He didn't seem to know what he was about. I don't know what it was, of course, but it's certain he'd lost his grip. Why, not a man on the street had discounted our information, and we'd had it for a week. Why we

stood in to win four millions and a quarter! And it's all gone.

FRA. Wells all stopped! Money all gone—and in one day! Gentlemen, I'm floored. What a turn! What a turn!

SOWLLD. Why, sir, Upgrades were selling yesterday for seventy-four. Now they're offered for thirty.

FRA. Lord! Lord! Why I thought Providence had got tired of abusing me. I'm the worst persecuted man since Job.

SOWLLD. Cheer up, my friend? You'll come out of all this right yet. [*Enter servant*].

SERV. There's a gentleman below says he must see Mr. Frary.

FRA. Send him up, Mary! [*Ex. Servant.*] I'll bet all I've got left to a Bungtown copper, its more bad news for me. Man's born to trouble. [*Enter lawyer's clerk.*]

CLK. [*Showing paper.*] Gilead W. Frary?

FRA. I'm that unfortunate cuss, sir. What have you got? An order of arrest? [*Takes paper.*] [*Ex. Clerk.*] Forbidden to remove any deposits—[*reading.*] Nowark, they've enjoined me from touching my own property. Now what the devil is there left? Won't one of you gentlemen kindly murder me? That's about all that can happen to me at present.

BAIN. One minute, Frary. Didn't I hear you say you had some money on deposit at the Cortlandt Bank?

FRA. Yes, but can I get it out?

Now. Give an ante-dated check, Mr. Frary. I advise it.

FRA. That's so! I can do that. [*Searching in pockets.*] Not a blank check. Sowlld, give me a blank check on the Cortlandt Bank, if you've got one. [*Sowlld takes papers and pocket-book out of pocket, and after searching, gives paper to Fra. Fra. unfolds paper, and a second paper drops out.*] Here, Sowlld [*taking paper to hand Sowlld.*] Hullo! What's this?

SOWLLD. A private paper. Let me have it. [*Reaching.*]

FRA. You miserable devil! [*Takes Sowlld by shoulders, and forces him into chair.*]

BAIN AND J. N. What is it?

FRA. Bainbridge, let me see those notes sent St. John. [*Bain. hands papers to Fra. who compares*

one of them with paper given by Sowlld.] As sure as the devil this is the man that killed him. Compare those two notes. [*Giving them to Bain.*]

BAIN. It's the same writing. But it's a woman's hand.

FRA. Mr. Sowlld, if I had you out in Idaho, I shouldn't want to guarantee your personal safety. Kentucky hemp, sir, has never in my judgment been put to a nobler use than it would be if it were round your neck, drawn tight. How did you come by that note?

SOWLLD. I'll not answer!

BAIN. [*Who has been comparing.*] I have it. I thought I'd seen that writing before. It's Mrs. St. John's French maid that wrote that note. And at your [*to Sowlld*] instigation, you cur. But you—what did you know?

SOWLLD. More than any man in the world but you, Laurence Bainbridge.

BAIN. How did you know it?

SOWLLD. The witness of your marriage told me. She died, you know. Well, I was her friend—

BAIN. And you were willing to break up a family, to ruin a woman's honor, to kill the man—

J. NOW. The man that took him out of the gutter?

BAIN. To gratify some spite against him, that I can't understand.

SOWLLD. Give me fair play, gentlemen—fair play. I wouldn't have harmed a hair of Henry St. John's head. I never meant to, but his wife—I hate her! See here, all's fair in war, they say, and she was trying to drive me out of his confidence, to put me back into the gutter that—I don't care who knows it—he did take me from.

BAIN. He asks for fair play, and asks it when the note he wrote or caused to be written, yesterday, drove St. John to his death as surely as if this man had driven a knife through his heart.

SOWLLD. So help me, God, I wrote no note yesterday. I caused none to be written. Whatever note St. John had, was not my work.

BAIN. Then Toinette—how much does Toinette know?

SOWLLD. Toinette really knows nothing, but the natural genius of the French is to imitate and improve upon the original, and I suppose Toinette thought she'd try her hand at it alone.

BAIN. My God! man, can you joke about this! You shall pay for it.

SOWLLD. In what way, Mr. Bainbridge? I only wrote, or caused to be written, what was true.

FRA. Well, sir, if that's the case, I'm going to make you commit perjury, and under the circumstances, it'll be the most honest thing you ever did in your life. Sit down at that table.

SOWLLD. I'll write nothing——

FRA. [*Moving towards Sowlld.*] Look here, young man——

SOWLLD. [*Seating himself at table.*] What do you want me to do?

FRA. Nowark, you're a notary. You'll put this thing in a legal form for him. Write what I say [*dictating*]: "Ephraim Sowlld, being sworn, deposes and says: That all statements heretofore made or hereafter to be made by him, against the character or defaming the past history of the widow of Henry St. John, are absolutely and damnably false, and he asserts that he knows nothing against the character of Mrs. St. John in any particular." Now sign it. Don't hesitate. [*Sowlld signs.*] Swear him, Nowark.

Now. You solemnly swear that this affidavit, by you subscribed, is true, so help you God.

FRA. Now go. Go! [*Ex. Sowlld.*] Oh, I've not got through with you yet. There! That snake's fangs are drawn.

BAIN. Frary, you've saved our dead friend's memory; you've [*grasping Fra.'s hand*] preserved the honor of the woman he thought his wife, and you've saved his child the stain of being called illegitimate. That cur won't dare do anything now. [*Enter Phil., Mort. and Mrs. Sun.*]

MRS. SUN. What was all the loud talk I heard here? Has Mr. Frary been telling one of his stories? [*Fra crosses to Mrs. Sun. and engages in conversation with her.*]

PHIL. Oh, Uncle Joe [*to Jos Now.*] you don't know how fast I'm learning to spell. Jack and I were going on a long walk, but I felt so proud of myself that I made him come back. Just hear me, J-A-C-H, Jack! There.

MORT. K, Phil. Usually spell it with a K.

PHIL. K. then. Don't you see? I only made a mistake of one letter. I don't think that was very much, do you?

J. Now. No, my dear, when the mistake fell from your lips.

PHIL. [*to Bain.*] What is the matter with Mr. Frary, Lawrence?

BAIN. My dear little girl, Mr. St. John's firm has failed, and we are afraid that most of Mr. Frary's money has gone in the failure.

PHIL. [*Going to Fra.*] Mr. Frary, have you lost your money? You shall have some of mine. I've got enough, and Jack and I don't want much; do we, Jack.

MORT. Don't want it so badly that we won't help Frary out of his scrape.

FRA. [*Coming forward with Phil.*] Bless your dear little heart, Miss Phillis, I'm sorriest for you and your Jack. I did intend to set you two people up in house-keeping in a style that should have been a credit to Gilead W. Frary, but I'm afraid, my dear, you'll have to take the will for the deed.

PHIL. [*To Bain*]. And Lawrence, what will become of Mrs. St. John. Oh, I pity her so much.

BAIN. Don't fear for Mrs. St. John, Phil. She will still have all she deserves. Her husband in his lifetime gave her money enough.

FRA. Yes, Mrs. Suncliffe, I've had a high time for a year or two. Whatever happens can't take away the recollection of that. Somehow, if everything is really gone, this thing seems like a sort of a dream.

J. Now. Oh! Mr. Frary, I'm certain that out of the wreck we can save something for you.

FRA. Well, if this has brought me nothing else, at least [*taking hand of Mrs. Sun. and going up to J. Now. with her*] it's brought me what a man don't usually get for money and that's love and friendship.

J. Now. What, sister, you don't mean——

MRS. SUN. I've been tired, for a long while, of being the widow Suncliffe. Frary isn't quite so aristocratic, but——

FRA. The fact is, we have concluded to enter into a partnership. By the way, I agreed to furnish some capital. I'm in doubt about that. [*To Mrs. Sun.*] What do you say? Does the agreement hold good?

MRS. SUN. Yes; I'll take my chances, I think.

PHIL. What, Aunt Agatha; you? Why—[*Throws her arms round Mrs. Suncliffe's neck and kisses her.*]

BAIN. [*To Mort.*] How knowing our little Phil. has become, all of a sudden.

MORT. Strange! Never could understand a woman's way, anyhow. [*Reënter L. Now. and H. Now.*]

L. Now. Why, brother Humphrey, this young lady doesn't seem to be in that dejected state proper to the woman tormented to know which of two brothers, one the greatest artist of his age—yes, no self-deprecation, Humphrey—the other, hem—

H. Now. The other, Lucius, a soul-enthraling poet. Yes, yes; I insist upon it. But what does this mean?

FRA. Ladies and gentlemen, one time I was a sort of stock-farmer in Nebraska. 'Twasn't much of a farm—only a few hundred acres or so—but I raised some considerable stock and cut some grass. One night there came along a tornado that blew every living thing on that farm, except the mules and me, into the Missouri River. That was bad enough, but right on the heels of that came a thunder-storm, and the lightning set fire to all my grain. That farm was as desolate as Ararat when the flood subsided. There wasn't a mitigating circumstance to the whole thing. But now—well---

BAIN. Now you think that your last good fortune has brought you something worth more than money?

FRA. I do, sir; and if every dollar's gone, I believe I've gained something worth living for from my last

“STREAK OF LUCK.”

(CURTAIN FALLS.)

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